

Message Text

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SUBJ: URUGUAY ADOPTS UNIFIED CUSTOMS TARIFF

REF: A) 77 MONTEVIDEO A-18 B) 77 MONTEVIDEO A-62

1. SUMMARY.

THE GOU'S NEW IMPORT REGIME, POSTPONED LAST YEAR AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR, WAS IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1978. RATES WERE MODIFIED TO ASSUAGE LOCAL INDUSTRIES WHICH HAD COMPLAINED THAT UNDER THE NEW REGIME THEIR IMPORT COSTS WOULD RISE SUBSTANTIALLY. THE GATT-BOUND TARIFF RATES ON IMPORTED ITEMS FROM GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES WILL REMAIN THE SAME. CONFUSION AND CONSEQUENT DELAYS IN IMPORT PROCESSING MAY BE A PROBLEM FOR URUGUAYAN CUSTOMS FOR SOMETIME. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 5, 1977, THE GOU CREATED THE IMPUESTO ADUANERO UNICO A LA IMPORTACION (IMADUNI) OR UNIFIED CUSTOMS TARIFF. (SEE REPAIR A). THE NEW IMPORT REGIME WAS UNCLASSIFIED

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DESIGNED TO REPLACE A NUMBER OF MINOR NUISANCE TAXES, FEES, AND THE STANDARD IMPORT DUTIES COLLECTED BY THE CUSTOMS BUREAU, WITH A SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM. A BASIC TARIFF RATE OF 25 PERCENT OF THE PRODUCT'S CUSTOMS VALUE WAS TO BE LEVIED ON MOST IMPORTS, WITH INCREASED RATES IN MULTIPLES OF 25 UP TO MAXIMUM OF 150 PERCENT FOR SPECIFIED PRODUCTS. IN ADDITION TO THE UNIFIED CUSTOMS TARIFF,

THE NEW SYSTEM WOULD INCLUDE A TAX OF 5 PERCENT ON THE MOVEMENT OF GOODS THROUGH CUSTOMS (TASA DE MOVILIZACION DE BULTOS), AND A PORT TAX OF ABOUT 13 PERCENT. THE IMADUNI, WHICH HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR IMPLEMENTATION ON JULY 1, 1977, WAS POSTPONED AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR AND IMPLEMENTATION SET FOR JANUARY 1, 1978 (SEE REFAIR B).

3. THE REASONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION POSTPONEMENT INVOLVED THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THE CUSTOMS BUREAU WAS HAVING IN ADMINISTRATIVELY PREPARING FOR THE CHANGE, THE OUTCRY FROM SOME DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES WHICH BELIEVED THE NEW REGIME WOULD MEAN HIGHER IMPORT COSTS, AND THE RELUCTANCE OF THE BANCO DE LA REPUBLICA TO PERMIT CHANGES IN IMPORT PROCEDURES WHICH TRANSLATED INTO A TRANSFERENCE OF THEIR AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO IMPORTATION TO THE CUSTOMS BUREAU. NEGOTIATION AMONG ALL PARTIES CONTINUED RIGHT UP THROUGH THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY, 1978 WHEN AN ACCORD WAS REACHED. (NO GOODS AT ALL CLEARED CUSTOMS THE FIRST FOUR DAYS OF 1978).

4. IN THE JANUARY 23, 1978 ISSUE OF THE GOU'S OFFICIAL GAZETTE, PRESIDENTIAL DECRET 7/978 WAS PUBLISHED. THE DECREE MODIFIES THE IMADUNI BY REDUCING THE BASIC 25 PERCENT TARIFF RATE TO 20 PERCENT AND BY REDUCING THE 5 PERCENT TAC ON THE MOVEMENT OF GOODS THROUGH CUSTOMS TO 2 PERCENT. THE DECREE MAKES THE NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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RATES RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 1978. ALL THE OTHER ASPECTS OF THE IMADUNI AS REPORTED IN REFAIR (B) REMAIN UNCHANGED. THE GATT-BOUND TARIFF RATES ON IMPORTED ITEMS FROM GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES VIRTUALLY REMAIN THE SAME. (THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE AN UPDATED LIST OF URUGUAYAN PRODUCTS WHOSE TARIFF RATES ARE GATT-BOUND).

5. SR. MARIO HECTOR PANIZZA, DIRECTOR OF IMPORTATION OF THE URUGUAYAN CUSTOMS BUREAU, HAS INDICATED TO EMBASSY THAT THERE REMAINS MUCH CONFUSION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW IMPORT REGIME. WHILE TRAINING HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO THE CUSTOMS OFFICERS, THE DETERMINATION OF CUSTOMS VALUE BY THE OFFICERS IS CAUSING PROBLEMS IN SOME CASES AND CONSEQUENT LONG DELAYS. EACH NEW CASE PRESENTS A NEW PROBLEM, AND UNTIL A SUFFICIENT AMOUNT OF FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH THE NEW REGIME IS DEVELOPED, THE DELAYS WILL CONTINUE. ON THE OTHER HAND, SE. TORRES, THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CUSTOMS BROKERS OF URUGUAY, REPORTS THAT THE NEW REGIME HAS BEEN MASTERED BY THE CUSTOMS BROKERS WITH LITTLE DIFFICULTY. SR. TORRES AGREED THAT WHILE SOME DELAYS

ARE CURRENTLY BEING ENCOUNTERED, THE NEW PROCEDURES
WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN A MORE EFFICIENT AND FASTER
SYSTEM BENEFITTING THE IMPORTER.
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